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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

Happy Holidays to you all!! If you're like me, you'll probably be scrambling this weekend to do some last-minute shopping. My wife and I have everything for friends and relatives; it seems like every year the last bit of shopping seems to be for each other! So, we'll see what happens over the weekend. I'm sure we'll be in good company, wandering the myriads of shopping malls.

We're both on vacation next week, so that should be interesting. I don't think we've both had the same vacation time for about 10 years! We'll be visiting family and friends on and after the holiday; and just getting stuff done that we've been putting off due to lack of time. And, we'll get some time to relax.

Otherwise, it's been a quiet week. The technology news has been somewhat limited the past few weeks. Other than the continuous stories about more and more dot-com companies failing, and the computer industry itself slowing down, there hasn't been too much to discuss. And perhaps the holiday season is also a typical slowdown period for businesses in general. We'll see what the new year brings. Wow, it's almost 2001 - the new millennium!

As per my habit, please take the holiday spirit to heart. Be careful and remember your fellow man. This is a time for office parties and family gatherings. Be responsible! If you're going to drink, be prepared not to drive! The life you save may be mine.

Until next time...

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Bit Bopper Is Now Freeware

O'WONDER, the creators of BiT BOPPER, an Audio Driven Video Synthesizer have made the following announcement:

"Five years after the Falcon was withdrawn by Atari in 1995, we continue to receive enquiries regarding BiT BOPPER, and are very grateful! However, we no longer have staff to support the product. As a result, you may download the software for FREE, but with NO support..."

<http://www.owonder.com/bitbopper/falcon/download/index.html>

VISION 4.0b Available

VISION 4.0b is now available and fixes some little bugs from 4.0a.
A Swedish translation is also available.

<http://vision.atari.org>

or

<http://www.multimania.com/jlusetti>

LTC Version 1.83 Available

A new Version of LTC (Luna Text Compiler) is available.
New Hypertext and much bug fixes are included.

<http://www.myluna.de>

cc65 2.6.0 (C Cross-compiler) Released

I'm proud to announce version 2.6 of CC65, a C cross-compiler /
cross-assembler combo for 6502 systems.

CC65 has C and runtime library support for many of the old 6502 machines,
including:

- The Commodore C64, C128 and the C16, C116, Plus/4 machines.
- The CBM 600/700 family (programs run in bank 1).
- Newer PET machines (not 2001)
- The Apple II (library support by Kevin Ruland
<kevin@rodin.wustl.edu>)
- The Atari 8 bit machines (thanks to the Atari team)
- GEOS for the C64 and C128 (GEOSLib by Maciej Witkowiak
<ytm@elysium.pl>)

The libraries are fairly portable, so creating a version for other 6502s
shouldn't be too much work.

New in this version:

- * All bugs mentioned on the bugs web page for version 2.5 are fixed.
- * Several new commands/features for the assembler, including a repeat
statement and target specific character sets.
- * More 65C02 support.
- * Module constructors/destructors (assembler/linker).
- * 'const' is honored in most places now, 'const' data goes into the
RODATA segment by default.
- * Lots of larger library routines rewritten in assembler for speed and
size (heap management, printf family).
- * New object dump utility.
- * New disassembler and assembler --> HTML converter (beta!).

- * New low level disk I/O module for the Atari, thanks to Christian Groessler, <cpg@aladdin.de>.
- * New mouse routines for the Atari machines by Christian Groessler and Freddy Offenga, <F.Offenga@student.kun.nl>. The mouse routines for the C64 are now debugged and should work (but still beta).
- * Other stuff.

There is still no support for the following features:

- * Floats and bit fields.
- * File routines on most systems. The 8 bit Ataris are the first machines that do have full file I/O support (besides the ACE port which was dropped some time ago). Please note that the complete CBM family doesn't have file I/O support!
- * The 80 column mode on the C128 is not supported by the conio library.

Available packages:

As usual I will provide the complete sources and several binary packages, including RPMs for RedHat Linux. Linux is the primary development platform, so the sources do compile out of the box on Linux machines. Please note that there are now separate RPMs for the compiler proper and the target specific libraries. To develop for one of the predefined target systems you need the compiler RPM package *and* one of the target machine packages.

Binaries for DOS and Windows will follow or may already be available at the time you read this. OS/2 packages will again be available, but since there are almost no downloads for OS/2, so the host platform may get dropped in the near future (again).

Download:

More information information and a download link, please visit the cc65 web page at:

<http://www.cc65.org/>

Thanks to all who sent feedback and suggestions and of course to anyone who helped developing cc65!

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Miranda
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, the holiday season is well and truly upon us. This is the first Christmas since my mother-in-law passed away. It's been tough on my wife and, therefore, on me. There simply are no words to ease the pain or to reassure. All one can do is

to persevere. Being an Atari user, I've gotten good at that.

I've always seen the holidays as a time to take stock of what you have. Both materially and spiritually. I don't claim to be religious or even spiritual, but for each of us there must be a point where we look back and say either "I've done okay" or "Boy, have I messed up". I find that, if I take a good hard look every so often, I can "take my medicine" in smaller doses. <grin>

So happy holidays to you and yours no matter what your beliefs (or disbeliefs). Take advantage of what this time of year has to offer. And no matter how much fun you're having, please, please, please... party responsibly. A moment's merriment isn't worth all the possible regret.

Okay, okay, enough of the moralizing. Let's get on with the news and stuff.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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Bengy Collins posts:

"The official English Poll, which will determine the fate of the "XTOS" Project by Medusa Computer Systems/switzerlandhe is now online at

<http://magicos.de/survey.html>

The Developers are coming along nicely, so the only main hurdle to get over is the 500 willing buyers.

The German version can be found on the official homepage:

<http://www.xtos.de>

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Other MagiC Online (<http://magicos.de>) Site news:

The st-computer articles, translated by Jens Hatlak, are now available on MagiC Online, as the official st-computer homepage no longer has an English section.

The entire Links.atari.org pages by Benjamin Kirchheim have been updated on both the links.atari.org webpages and the mirror on MagiC Online."

Chris Wilkinson tells Bengy:

"If 500 buyers is the only hurdle to get over then why aren't many specs available. The survey is not entirely necessary also, because if Medusa have any 'smarts' about them they will use current industry standards etc...to keep the burgeoning cost down...and not worry about what we the potential buyers (rightly or wrongly) think should be used in the new machine...its common sense you see...

Also, what IS the likely cost of the XTOS machine going to be? Without knowing WHAT I'm saying yes to buying, and not knowing

HOW MUCH I'm going to pay for WHAT, I'm not going to say 'yes'.
I think Medusa have a cheek to ask us to commit to something we
know ... nothing about..."

Lonny Pursell tells Chris:

"Some of those thoughts crossed my mind as well. I am not so
sure it's just "Medusa" and I think directing comments solely
at them is jumping the gun just a bit. The Medusa site has
not changed at all and you would think if they were the driving
force behind it, something would appear there. At minimum
a link to the poll? I tried to read translations of the
german text and I got the impression someone else is building
this and Medusa is involved?

I would buy a new machine solely from Medusa, I've just don't it.
Personally I'd like more information as to it's origin before
drawing any real conclusions. If you look at Medusa's past
they just design a machine, put it out there, set a price and
if you can't afford it... well, you can't afford it. ;-)

So can someone provide more information as to the combined
efforts going into this machine? Bengy? You are hosting the
poll can we get the entire site translated?!"

Bengy replies:

"I suppose they want to get a feel of what it will take for Atari-fans
to buy the machine. For example, a large number of people have demanded
built-in midi ports as standard..

Once again, the specs are not available because they are not
determined.. If everyone says, using the example above, that MIDI ports
are of prime importance, that will effect both the cost of the machine
and midi being built in. However detrimental you believe this method to
be, this is the path that they have chosen.

Notice they are not asking "will you buy it: yes or no". They are asking
what you would be willing to pay, and with what options that price you
name includes (and just as important, what it does not include). The
closest the poll comes to asking you if will buy the machine or not is
the price field: If you will not buy it, you have the option of
entering \$0."

Tim Conrardy asks for Falcon help:

"I have a Falcon, and when I am not working on my midi stuff, I would
like to play a good Excellent Graphic Oriented game, preferably a Space
fly-around- shoot em up type game. Good sound too.

Can anyone point me to a Falcon-specific game (s) that are on the net
(freeware, shareware, postcardware, etc.)that meets these requirements?
HEY...even us Atarian Midi-ists gotta shoot'em up in Space !!"

Shiuming Lai tells Tim:

"When run on a Falcon the in-game music is generated at a higher sample rate than the STE, too. Apart from that it's also a great game with excellent graphics and sound and based in space."

Dan Ackerman adds:

"Dave Bagget also did a Falcon version of his asteroids game. It had nice graphics and sound. I know a version of it is available at the old umich archives if no where else. I also think there were a bunch of Falcon games released recently out of germany and some of them had a space motif.

If you want a really stupid game with lame graphics then you can try my old game Astropanic94. <grin>"

Artur Stachon asks about a hard drive for his Falcon:

"Can you use any laptop HD on a falcon? Any brand? Any size? Is the internal HD only IDE or is it SCSI too?"

Clayton Murray tells Artur:

"Several years ago, I tried putting a Western Digital IDE 2.5" in my Falcon, but despite my trying everything on my ICD utilities disk, I could not get the Falcon to see it. So I asked Tom Harker at ICD if he had any ideas, and he said:

"You cannot use IBM or WD IDE hard drives with the Falcon. Try Quantum or Seagate. I have had good success with the Quantum "Europa series 2.5 inch IDE drives and the Falcon. It is a problem in the timing of the command frames that makes them not work with the Falcon."

I also asked Chris Crowchuck(?) at Computer Direct, and he said: 'With the IBM drives, they report wrong sector and interleaving etc. under HD Driver. You can set these settings yourself and have HD Driver create a boot sector that should work. You are best to avoid IBM and Western Digital though for sure.

We have had success with the Maxtor, Seagate, Fujitsu and Quantum drives.' I'm now using a 1.08 gig Toshiba 2.5" IDE drive in my Falcon. Works great.

I don't know if that helps, but at least I can now feel good about saving all those emails from different companies."

Peter West adds:

"I fitted an IDE 3.5" 6.4 GB IBM-DTTA-350640 drive into my Falcon in place of the original 2.5", using the ABS/Mario adapter for the connections, and have had no problems so far under HDDRIVER! (FX Fingers crossed /FX)."

Tony Cianfaglione asks about partition limits:

"Are there limits to the amount of partitions in TOS 2.06?"

The reason I ask this is that a friend has 2 Mega ST4's (one has 2.06) and it will not read his Megafile 30 with the partitions contained on it whereas his other ST4 with a newer TOS (3?) sees the partitions and can access them. The Megafile, is located in the scsi chain, after a Metafile with 10 partitions on it.

Does TOS 2.06 have a limit on partitions (eg..10)?"

Greg Goodwin tells Tony:

"Yes, 14 (C-P).

This [your problem] is almost certainly a software problem, but I have only used Megafiles as single items on the chain, so I don't know how to help you."

Steve Sweet asks about news server problems:

"Is anyone else getting news server problems?. I started getting errors about 3 days ago, then reports that suggested my index files were shot, so I deleted them and all i got was a truck load old group tripe and a few new one's.

Whilst looking into it I discovered that bun.com and skynow.net have the same IP no's for their various servers. Is this because they use the same sources or are IP no's standardised in some way?.

What software are you using on both machines to drive the HD?"

Lyndon Amsdon tells Steve:

"I'm not sure but they may use supernews as their news server like mine. Try resolving the IP number to find the name of it using one of the utilities out there. Sting tools comes to mind."

Fritz-Ulrich Siewert asks about reading ST floppies on a PC:

"I can't read ST-formatted Floppies on my PC, and the Vgaread-Program won't help.

Any suggestions? I dislike the thought that I must copy everything onto PC-formatted disks on the ST!"

Steve Sweet tells Fritz-Ulrich:

"I use a program called DC format 3 in which you can have the pc bit written to the disk. What's more it'll even allow for extended formatted disk to be read and written via pc, yep you can use more space:) The program is available from my LaST PD web site:

www.last-pd.co.uk

Edward Baiz asks about accessing "secure" web sites:

"Is it possible to use an Atari computer on WWW and access secured sites?"

Thomas Knecht tells Edward:

"[This may be a] Rather poor option (and maybe not exactly what you're asking for) is requesting web pages at https addresses via e-mail sent to a web-by-mail server. www4mail supports this since recently by version 2.4p4 running at www4mail@wm.ictp.trieste.it . Form submission should be possible there, though reliability seems to be low."

Ekkehard Flessa adds:

"It is, provided you use MiNT+MiNT-Net. The appropriate cab.ovl with ssl-support can be found at <http://www.netppl.fi/~jasivu/files/>. There are also some new ports of openssh and openssl to be found on the spareMiNT pages at:

<http://wh58-508.st.uni-magdeburg.de/sparemint/html/packages.html>."

John Oakes adds his thoughts:

"Recently I had trouble with Draconis bombing me, when accessing amazon.co.uk. I eventually sussed my problem, but I use it for ordering from amazon with no problem. I think the secured site problem may stem from linking to https sites. this does trip up on certain software. On Linux lynx web browser it has the same problem of access to https, but with the lynx-ssl it's like knives through butter."

Chris Simon jumps in and posts:

"I use CAB at home and have set up some secured sites in work. In the past, CAB has been able to provide the username and password dialog but for some reason always failed to authenticate properly and the dialog keeps reappearing without allowing access.

I've just tried it again now and for some reason CAB now bombs when trying to access a secured page!

Try it yourself to see what happens in your browser. Go to <http://admin.t.bangor.ac.uk> and select any of the sites listed under "Restricted Access". (I suggest the Card Enquiry or Prospectus Enquiries ones).

Of course, you haven't got a valid username and password, but at least you'll be able to ascertain whether your browser actually works and asks you for a username.

However, sites that use server-side scripting coupled with HTML forms to submit user names and passwords should work OK, but I haven't got any examples of those."

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - 'Evil Dead'!   'Thunder Tanks'!  
    " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "  
                                'Bugs & Taz'!   NCAA Final Four!  
                                'The Bouncer'!   3D Ultra Pinball!  
                                And much more!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News      -   The Latest Gaming News!
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“The response from ‘Evil Dead’ fans has been amazing,” stated Alison

Quirion, senior marketing manager, THQ. ``They feel as if the game represents a lost episode justly serving the horror film series. In addition to great gameplay capability, the taunt-at-will command with Ash's infamous one-liners feels like a bonus for enthusiasts and is well worth the sticker-price alone."

In ``Evil Dead: Hail to the King," players assume the role of Ash, the chainsaw-armed hero from the ``Evil Dead" trilogy, in a story that continues the ongoing saga of the Necronomicon ex Mortis, otherwise known as 'Book of the Dead.' When Ash returns to the cabin in the woods, he is faced with the challenge of battling more than 20 startling enemies including deadites, skeletons, and even Evil Ash with freedom to move and attack with multiple weapons simultaneously.

Gamers are offered fully upgradable weapons including the axe, rifle, shotgun and chainsaw in combat. Huge environments include a blend of favorite ``Evil Dead" settings and brand new locations that serve to expand the ``Evil Dead" universe. Offering a wide variety of enemies, puzzles and settings, the story unfolds with several in-game and pre-rendered sequences.

``Evil Dead: Hail to the King" for Dreamcast mixes the fun of a campy horror movie with intense combat sequences and clever puzzle-solving. This horror classic will also be released on PC CD-ROM early 2001.

3DO Ships 'World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks' for PlayStation2 Computer Entertainment System

The 3DO Company announced that the ``World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks" game for PlayStation2 computer entertainment system shipped on schedule to retailers, just in time for Christmas.

The press worldwide is raving about the stunning graphics and multi-player mayhem of the ``World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks" game. GameSpot, one of the largest online gaming sites said, ``With excellent graphics, numerous control options, solid sound, and fun gameplay, the PS2 version of the game looks as if it could be the best tank game that 3DO has ever published." Imagine's PlayStation Magazine was equally glowing in their praise of the game: ``...its environments and tanks are already looking super-sharp and move at a brisk framerate. Its numerous special effects, such as a real-time motion blur and weather changes, are also certain to put the system through its paces. More impressive yet, all of the structures in the game can be realistically decimated in real time -- they actually crumble where you shoot them, and can even be 'cut in half' with artillery fire." Silicon Magazine chimed in with, ``Picking up where Battle Tanx left off, World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks is a beast. The PS2 hardware allows WDL's developers to really flex some graphic muscle."

``This is the start of something big for 3DO," said Trip Hawkins, chairman and CEO of The 3DO Company. ``'Thunder Tanks' is the first of numerous impressive PlayStation 2 titles that we will be releasing over the next six months. We're really excited to be in on the ground floor for this incredible gaming platform."

The ``Thunder Tanks" game is the ultimate in spectacle entertainment. It's an ``over the top" tournament where the contenders battle it out using

tanks. This mega-event is broadcast on the fictional WDL television network throughout its post-apocalyptic society. The match-ups take place in battle-stages in famous locations all around the world. While the WDL has outrageous attitude, over-done action, and trash-talking commentators, the competitors take it very seriously...they'll stop at destroying nothing in order to win the championship title.

The ``Thunder Tanks" game for the PlayStation 2 console is playable by up to four people (using the Multitap) and features an all-new, high-resolution engine that displays incredibly crisp graphics with better textures and more color depth. Texture usage includes tracks in the dirt and shell and scorch marks on buildings. The Thunder Tanks game also utilizes anti-aliasing, extensive light sourcing and dynamic lighting. It also pushes the limits of amazing special effects with a spectacular nuclear blast effect that will blow entire cityscapes into debris, swept up in the direction of the expanding blast. The game also features smoking wreckage, sparking metal and debris clouds from collapsing buildings.

Square Announces Release Dates for Two PlayStation 2 Computer Entertainment System Games

The Bouncer and Driving Emotion Type-S Due Out
Early Next Year

Square Electronic Arts announced the release schedule for two highly anticipated PlayStation2 titles due out early next year. The Bouncer, an action fighting game will hit U.S. store shelves March 2001. In addition, Square will launch Driving Emotion Type-S, a high-speed driving game on January 30, 2001.

``We are very excited to bring to market The Bouncer and Driving Emotion Type-S for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system," said Jun Iwasaki, president of Square Electronic Arts. ``Our development team has set extremely high benchmarks for itself resulting in the delivery of games that will raise the industry's bar in the areas of graphics and gameplay. Whether consumers want a high-speed driving or action role playing experience, they will be blown away with these two titles."

The Bouncer combines heart-pounding action with Square's trademark storytelling skills and role-playing game (RPG) elements. The story begins at a bar as a bouncer named Sion is beginning his shift for the day. A quiet morning is abruptly interrupted when a break-in occurs and the intruders manage to kidnap Sion's friend Dominique. This begins a dangerous rescue mission, as Sion and his fellow bouncers travel far and wide in search of Dominique's kidnappers. In addition to the game's bilingual (English/Japanese) voiceover dialogue and fluid gameplay-to-full-motion-video transitions, The Bouncer offers a complete 3D environment that allows battle to take place anywhere and high resolution graphics that capture fine details like realistic facial expressions and real life tatoos on the characters. All features are made possible by the PlayStation 2 system's enhanced processing power and new DVD format. The Bouncer features three different game modes including Story, Versus, Survival and allows for up to four simultaneous players in the multiplayer Versus mode.

Driving Emotion Type-S is a driving simulation game that immerses players in the experience of high-performance sports car racing. The game

accurately recreates the feeling of racing at top speeds with high-resolution graphics and in-game physics that detect handling, suspension techniques and collisions. The game also allows for air, weight, gravity and resistance, all of which must be factored in as players race toward the finish. For Driving Emotion Type-S, Square garnered the licenses to such exotic car manufacturers as Porsche and Ferrari, letting players race with the real-life representation of these high-performance cars.

The Bouncer and Driving Emotion Type-S are compatible with the DUALSHOCK2 analog controller. Both games carry a suggested retail price of U.S. \$50. The Bouncer is rated "'T" (Teen) and Driving Emotion Type-S is rated "'E" (Everyone).

Infogrames, Inc. Whirls Famous Cartoon Characters
to Stores This Week In Bugs Bunny & Taz Time Busters

America's Favorite Hare and Devil Go
Back in Time in Truly Innovative
Two-Player Cooperative Game on Sony PlayStation

Get in your time machines! Infogrames, Inc. officially announced that Bugs Bunny & Taz Time Busters will arrive in stores next week on the PlayStation game console. Join the gyrating tornado of intense whirling action and the wisecracking, carrot-munching hare as they team up in a wild adventure through time!

While on duty as the top pest controller for "'Jet Age Pest Control," Daffy Duck accidentally breaks Granny's time regulator and is thrown back in time with the core of the machine, a precious gem. It is up to our heroes, Bugs Bunny and the Tasmanian Devil to bring back this gem and restore the time order. To do so, this unlikely pair will have to travel through four different eras and outsmart some of the toughest Looney Tunes adversaries around, including Yosemite Sam, Elmer Fudd, Nasty Canasta, Babba Chop, and Count Bloodcount.

"'Bugs & Taz are two of America's all-time favorite cartoon characters," said Jeff Nuzzi, director of marketing for Infogrames, Inc.'s I-Stars Label. "'With the unique cooperative play option, kids can team up and enjoy hilarious hare-raising action for hours on end!"

In the latest Looney Tunes adventure game, players will experience original gameplay through cooperative play -- in single player mode, players can choose to be either Bugs or Taz and switch between them to conquer different obstacles, or team up with friends in two-player mode and complete the adventure together. Adding to the fun, players will lead Bugs and Taz through four exciting Looney Tunes inspired time periods to acquire the all-important gem -- The Aztec Era, the Viking Era, the Arabian Nights, and Transylvania. Players can enjoy over 30 levels of sporting contests, quests, boss encounters, and daredevil chases!

Developed by Artificial Mind and Movement in Quebec, Bugs Bunny & Taz Time Busters is available at an estimated retail price of \$19.99 and can be found at most major retail outlets. A personal computer version of Bugs Bunny & Taz Time Busters will also be shipping to stores next week.

Activision Hits the Road With Walt Disney World
Quest - Magical Racing Tour For the Nintendo Game
Boy Color

Activision, Inc. and Disney Interactive give gamers the run of Walt Disney World Resort in Walt Disney World Quest -- Magical Racing Tour. A four-wheeled racing romp through some of the most popular Disney theme parks and water parks, Walt Disney World Quest -- Magical Racing Tour is rated "E" by the ESRB and is currently available for the Nintendo Game Boy Color for a suggested retail price of \$29.99.

"Walt Disney World Quest -- Magical Racing Tour allows children of all ages to take the magic of Disney theme parks with them wherever they go," said Larry Goldberg, executive vice president, Activision Worldwide Studios. "With fun tracks, authentic music and humorous power-ups, the game is sure to entertain children of all ages."

A multi-vehicle racing romp, Walt Disney World Quest -- Magical Racing Tour takes players on a high-speed tour through 13 action-packed fantasy tracks based on popular Walt Disney World Resort theme park attractions and water parks such as Space Mountain, Pirates of the Caribbean, Rock 'n Roller Coaster and Typhoon Lagoon. Tasked with finding all the pieces of a giant fireworks machine, gamers play as their favorite Disney friends, including Chip 'n Dale, Jiminy Cricket, and 11 additional characters.

Around every turn there are secret treasures, hidden tracks and speedy power-ups to help players stay far ahead of the competition. Because every second counts, gamers can launch a variety of fun objects at the competition such as frog spells, teacup mines and flying acorns to spin them out of control and gain an advantage.

989 Sports' NCAA Final Four 2001 Drives to the
Hoop With the Only College Basketball Action
Available for the Playstation2 Computer
Entertainment System

Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. announced that NCAA Final Four 2001 from the 989 Sports development team takes to the court on December 19 as the only college hoops game available for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Utilizing the power of the PlayStation 2, gamers will experience the most realistic game in the series to date through intricately-detailed arenas and player models that are scaled to actual player height, weight and body style and include such detail as tattoos and facial animations. Gameplay that blazes at 60 frames per second provides incredibly authentic animations that have been motion-captured from former college stars. ESPN's Quinn Buckner play-by-play call, real college fight songs and crowd chants, and arenas designed from actual blueprints further capture the intensity of college basketball.

NCAA Final Four 2001 takes fans through the rigors of a full college season with more than 300 Division I-A schools representing 31 different conferences, from the powerhouses to the Cinderella-producers. Fight for the league title and follow the "Bubble Watch" feature as players track their team's progress towards a berth in the 64-team NCAA Tournament. Each team in NCAA Final Four 2001 runs its offense and defense similar to the style of play of each college. Team-specific playbooks allow players to

execute trademark strategies including Florida's full court press, Arizona's three-point offense and Temple's stifling match-up zone.

'NCAA Final Four 2001 is the only way to enjoy intense, true-to-life college hoops on the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system," said Ami Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. 'The 989 Sports team has utilized the PlayStation 2 system's power to crank up the college realism through detailed players, arenas and animations plus school-specific fight songs and chants that offer the intensity and true spirit of Final Four tourney action."

More than 1,000 motion-captured moves including an array of dunks, shots and steals, as well as new passes including the one-handed bounce pass, no look pass and behind-the-back dish make NCAA Final Four 2001 look like the real thing. Adding to the authentic experience, the game incorporates movements from former college basketball stars such as California's Jason Kidd.

Further complementing the features college basketball fans expect, ESPN announcer and former Indiana star Quinn Buckner returns to call the action with brand new commentary paired with TV-style presentation complete with multiple camera angles and pop-up statistics. Adding to the fun is comprehensive stat tracking for teams and individual players in 32 different categories plus awards including first and second team All-American, National Player of the Year and Conference Player of the Year. All new Artificial Intelligence results in the most advanced computer opponents ever implemented into a college basketball game, while an improved Touch Shooting Meter(TM) gives players more control of shot accuracy.

NCAA Final Four 2001 for the PlayStation 2 Key Features:

- Only college basketball game compatible with the new PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system
- All-new 3D player models scaled to actual height, weight and body style and even include such minutiae as tattoos, t-shirts under jerseys and facial animations during games
- More than 300 Division I-A teams from 31 different conferences
- College arenas designed to mirror their real-life counterparts
- Play-by-play commentary by ESPN college basketball announcer Quinn Buckner
- Real college atmosphere with animated crowds, cheerleaders, chants and fight songs
- The "Touch Shooting Meter" provides the gamer complete control over player shooting abilities
- The "6th Man Meter" returns to fire up the home crowd and help the home team make shots
- More than 1,000 motion capture moves by former college standouts (and current NBA pros) along with players congratulating each other, coaches yelling orders from the sidelines, the ability to pass after starting to shoot, put-back slam dunks and the ability to run the baseline while inbound the ball (when legal)
- Authentic college-specific playbooks
- "Bubble Watch" feature gives the gamer updates on team performance during the season-long run to the NCAA Tournament
- Icon Passing(TM), Icon Cutting and Icon Switching returns to give the gamer ultimate control of his players on both offense and defense
- Features all Division I-A conferences including such favorites as the Pac-10, Atlantic 10, Big 12, Big East, SEC, Big Ten, Big Sky, Big West, Ivy League, Conference USA, Missouri Valley, MAAC, Northeast, Southern,

- Sun Belt, TransAmerica, WAC, West Coast, Mid Continent and Mid-American
- Awards -- first and second team All-Americans, National Player of the Year and Conference Player of the Year
- Four game modes: Tournament, Exhibition, Season and Arcade
- Four gameplay settings -- Freshman through Senior
- Supports the DUALSHOCK 2 analog controller for ultra-realistic experience
- Up to eight players can play with Multi Tap (for PlayStation2)

The independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rates NCAA Final Four 2001 ``E" for ``Everyone."

Sierra Delivers New Hoyle Card Game Excitement and Portable Pinball Thrills

Sierra On-Line, Inc. announced that Hoyle Card Games and 3-D Ultra Pinball: Thrill Ride are now available for Nintendo Game Boy Color and headed for store shelves just in time for last-minute holiday shopping. Hoyle Card Games and Thrill Ride are excellent holiday choices for handheld enthusiasts, frequent travelers or anyone looking for a new game for the Game Boy Color system.

``With more than 11 million Game Boy Color handheld systems sold in the U.S., the market place for new games for the whole family is growing tremendously," said Steve Van Horn, senior vice president and business unit manager for Sierra. ``The popularity of both pinball and card games make Hoyle Card Games and Thrill Ride great additions to our Game Boy product offering by bringing new 'family favorite' games onto additional entertainment platforms."

Hoyle Card Games Game Boy Color Feature Overview

Hoyle Card Games for Game Boy Color, the latest product in the best-selling Hoylefi game series, gives players endless hours of fun at their fingertips with favorite card game variations from Hoyle, the card game experts. The game features:

- Fourteen challenging games including Crazy 8's, Cribbage, Gin Rummy, Go Fish, Hearts, Old Maid, Spades, War and six variations of Solitaire including Free Cell, Golf, Klondike and Pyramid.
- Endless replay and quality graphics.
- Fourteen Hoyle characters to play against.
- Multiplayer capabilities for two people on a single unit, or head-to-head using a Game Boy Game Link cable.
- Perfect entertainment for business and leisure travel.
- Authentic Hoyle rules with game hints and tips.
- Easy-to-use interface and adjustable skill levels from novice to the expert gambler.

3-D Ultra Pinball: Thrill Ride Game Boy Color Feature Overview

Pinball fanatics won't have to worry about tilting this game or digging in the couch for extra quarters to try this virtual pinball favorite, 3-D Ultra Pinball: Thrill Ride is perfect portable pinball featuring:

- Fourteen unique pinball tables total with amusement park themes
- two main tables and twelve mini-events.

- Reflex-testing multi-ball events.
- "Nudge" or "shake" table controls.
- "Rumble Pak" option to simulate flipper and bumper collisions.
- Bright, colorful and challenging tables.

Available now at the MSRP of \$29.95 each, Hoyle Card Games and 3-D Ultra Pinball: Thrill Ride for Nintendo Game Boy Color can be ordered online at www.sierra.com.

EA SPORTS Ships F1 CHAMPIONSHIP Season 2000 for the PlayStation 2

Jump into the cockpit, start your engine and get into the game with F1 CHAMPIONSHIP Season 2000, released Wednesday by Electronic Arts for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. The first 2000 season Formula One title available for the next generation console, F1 CHAMPIONSHIP Season 2000 provides the definitive Formula One racing experience.

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP Season 2000 gives the PlayStation 2 gamer their first chance to race head-to-head in a 4-player split screen mode with the PlayStation 2 multitap adapter, a compelling multi-player experience on a single console. In addition, up to 22 players can race in a turn based time trial mode representing any driver from the 2000 season grid, including Championship winner Michael Schumacher and promising newcomer, Jenson Button.

Taking advantage of the new technological capabilities of the PlayStation 2 console, F1 CHAMPIONSHIP Season 2000 marries high-resolution visuals, high-speed gameplay and advanced race dynamics, involving the player in spectacular crashes such as car flips, spins and rolls with accurately modelled damage effects. With in-depth behind the scenes technical support from the Orange Arrows and Benetton Formula One teams, gamers are able to enter the world of Formula One racing with detailed realism.

"We have created the most detailed and visually stunning Formula One game to date," said John Rostron, executive producer for F1 CHAMPIONSHIP Season. "Every track has been accurately recreated including individually modeled tire walls and sponsor hoardings reflecting each race on the 2000 season. Each car has been designed by an ex-Formula One designer and is accurate down to the smallest detail. And the damage model enables spectacular crashes; you can even see the carbon fiber where the paint has been rubbed away or exposed during a collision."

Adding to the realism, gamers can now experience the intense pressure of a Formula One pit stop. Utilizing EA SPORTS advanced motion capture technology and the body dynamics of real life Benetton pit stop mechanics, EA was able to create a full 22 man pit stop featuring complete nose-cone and tire changes.

Formula One fans will be fully immersed while racing with a full broadcast presentation. The replay camera positioning on the tracks has been directed by Formula One race director Keith McKenzie, the winner of the 1999 FIA award for best Formula One broadcast coverage. Using the PlayStation 2 engine, players will receive genuine broadcast camera replications including on-board camera images as well as pre-race introductions by real life TV presenters such as ITV's Jim Rosenthal (UK), Jean-Louis Moncet (France), Kai Ebel (Germany), and Ivan Cappelli (Italy).

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP Season 2000 is available on the PlayStation, PC and the PlayStation 2 and is rated ``E" (Everyone) by the ESRB. The game has a suggested retail price of \$49.95 for PlayStation 2 and \$39.95 for PlayStation and PC.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

U.S. May Up AOL Merger Ante

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is reportedly requiring America Online (AOL) to open its instant messaging system to rivals before giving final approval to the merger between the Internet service provider (ISP) and media giant Time Warner.

An FCC staff recommendation would require AOL to make its instant messaging service -- with more than 60 million users -- interoperable with at least one other ISP's instant messaging service when using Time Warner's cable lines, according to published sources.

The rumored requirement may revive a long-standing fight among major ISPs over the instant messaging issue. Last year, AOL was accused of closing access to its instant messenger service while Microsoft Corporation attempted to propagate its Microsoft Messenger service.

Some saw approval from the FCC as a given after the US\$183 billion merger between AOL and Time Warner won the go-ahead from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) last week. The FCC, currently in talks with both companies, is the mega-merger's final hurdle, although the five-member commission could impose its own requirements prior to clearance.

As a condition of its approval, the FTC forced Time Warner to open its cable lines to AOL competitors -- a stipulation that resulted in a deal with EarthLink last week. AOL representatives would not comment other than to say that the merger is on track for completion early next year.

AOL maintains a giant lead over other ISPs with its Instant Messenger (AIM), and has come under attack for allegedly trying to keep it that way. The company cites security concerns as the reason for its reluctance to open the system to users of other messaging services.

However, AOL has teamed with companies such as EarthLink and MindSpring to bring more users into its own messaging system. The instant messaging battle reached its height in July 1999, when AOL electronically blocked messages from users of Microsoft's Messenger.

Microsoft, now a partner in a coalition of companies offering interoperable instant messaging, continues to call for an instant messaging standard that would be compatible with all the major ISPs.

Instead of opening up its message service entirely, the FCC would reportedly allow AOL the option of adopting an industry standard that would make its system interoperable with others.

The FCC is also reportedly considering a requirement that would prevent AOL and Time Warner from discriminating against rivals in the new company's delivery signals and content for interactive television.

Deferring to the findings of the FTC in its approval, the FCC is not expected to attach any requirements dealing with AOL competitors' access to Time Warner's cable lines or shared ownership of those lines with AT&T.

Rivals Oppose AOL Instant Messenger

Companies that compete with America Online in the growing market for instant messaging are making last-minute pitches for conditions on the company's merger with Time Warner. Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates is among those lobbying the government.

As the Federal Communications Commission inches toward a final decision on the \$111 billion marriage of AOL and Time Warner, a deal announced almost a year ago, rivals are stepping up efforts to extract concessions they say would promote competition.

Companies, including ExciteAtHome, Microsoft and AT&T, are urging the agency to require AOL to work toward making its instant messaging service operate with their systems.

Microsoft's Gates has even made personal calls to members of the Federal Communications Commission on the subject, according to documents made public Tuesday.

The lobbyists want customers to be able to send real-time short messages to each other even while using different services. That would make instant messaging similar to how people now communicate using different e-mail providers or make a phone call over more than one telephone network.

On Tuesday, instant messaging providers met with FCC members and staff to press them to attach requirements to AOL's merger.

The FCC staff already has recommended an instant messaging condition to the five commissioners. That recommendation, however, would apply more narrowly to advanced instant messaging services offered over Time Warner's cable lines and would require AOL only to make its system work with one other provider, according to sources familiar with the review.

Rivals are pushing for a broader standard that would let customers of all other providers send messages to AOL users.

The current recommendation "falls short of the need for consumers to be able to communicate seamlessly across platforms," said Estela Mendoza of ExciteAtHome.

Gates emphasized similar points in phone calls to FCC Chairman William Kennard and two other commissioners last week, the documents made public

Tuesday said.

Gates stressed that without having to satisfy conditions on the merger, AOL will be able to further strengthen its position in the market. AOL already boasts about 140 million registered users through its AIM and ICQ services.

Gates also noted that instant messaging is evolving into more than just a text service. It can support audio and video teleconferencing and could be a key feature in interactive television that allows consumers to access the Internet through their TV sets.

Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., who heads the Senate Commerce subcommittee on communications, urged the agency in a letter Tuesday to "prevent the Balkanization of this new service and all its potential."

Earlier this month, AOL Chairman Steve Case met with Kennard and various agency staff members to argue that other companies are gaining footholds quickly in the instant messaging market. He also said any attempt to intervene in how the service is delivered could stifle innovation and growth, according to company filings.

Company executives have said they want to make their systems work with other providers but first need assurances that security and privacy of consumers will be protected.

AOL and Time Warner received antitrust approval for their deal last week. The FCC is expected to act by year's end or early January.

States Approve Sales Tax Plan Aimed at Internet

A coalition of U.S. states voted unanimously on Friday to approve a plan to simplify their sales tax codes, with an eye toward eventually capturing revenue from Internet and catalog sales.

With three states not present, member states of the Streamlined Sales Tax Project voted 26-0 to send their plan on to state legislatures in hopes that some will pass it into law in the 2001 legislative session.

Nine other states participated as observers in the telephone conference-call vote.

"Hopefully, this will provide what we need to get going," said Charles Collins, a North Carolina tax administrator who co-chairs the group.

The plan calls for states to simplify their tax codes to make it easier to collect revenues from Internet and catalog sales, which are estimated at \$600 billion and expected to grow exponentially in the next few years.

States are currently prohibited from collecting taxes from businesses outside their jurisdiction by a 1992 Supreme Court ruling and by Congress' three-year moratorium on new Internet taxes, which is set to expire in October 2001.

Many state and local authorities say this prohibition pinches public revenues and unfairly discriminates against "bricks-and-mortar" retailers

that are subject to sales tax.

Businesses point to the maze of state and local regulations governing sales taxes as a reason why such taxes are impractical.

The plan calls for third-party companies to determine and administer the sales tax on each transaction in a manner similar to credit-card companies.

The recipient's address would determine the tax jurisdiction.

Although the plan allows states some flexibility to determine what items should be taxed, it must be passed in essentially the same form among a number of states in order to be effective.

Between six and eight states are expected to take a look at the plan this year, Collins said.

The plan will also be sent to the National Governors' Association and the National Association for State Legislatures for review, but Collins said he did not expect either group to change it significantly.

MS Unveils Embedded Whistler Beta

The company further breaks up its Windows 2000 successor and releases new development tools to push Whistler into new markets.

Microsoft said on Monday that it has begun shipping to approximately 100 partners and customers the first beta version of its Whistler Embedded product.

Whistler Embedded makes Whistler, Microsoft's successor to Windows 2000, available as a set of discretely licensable modules. Whistler Embedded is being designed to run inside devices such as advanced set-top boxes, routers, and Windows-based terminals.

By further dividing Windows into components and offering tools targeted at embedded systems developers, Microsoft is hoping to build market share for Windows as the system software that runs inside devices, not just inside PCs and servers.

Currently, Microsoft markets two of its products as embedded operating systems: Windows NT Embedded 4.0 and Windows CE 3.0.

"We will always have these two embedded offerings," said Microsoft lead product manager Deanne Hoppe.

She said Windows CE will continue to be targeted at smaller-footprint, memory-constrained devices that may or may not run Intel processors, such as Pocket PC-based devices and MSN Web Companions.

Windows NT Embedded/Whistler Embedded is aimed at Intel-based devices that typically require the full set of Win32 application programming interfaces and full implementation of Windows networking.

IDC analyst Al Gillen noted that Windows CE competes head-to-head with other "hard-core" embedded operating systems, such as Wind River Systems'

VxWorks and embedded versions of Linux, more than Windows NT Embedded or Whistler Embedded does.

"Microsoft calls this (Windows NT Embedded/Whistler Embedded) 'embedded' because it's not designed to be configured by the end user," Gillen said.

Windows NT Embedded/Whistler Embedded are bigger and more resource-intensive than are most embedded operating systems, he added.

Embedded versions of Windows have a host of competitors from established companies such as Wind River and comparative newcomers advocating Linux. Microsoft has a different financial approach from these companies, though.

Embedded operating system companies typically receive a large fraction of revenue from the consulting and support fees required to customize the operating system and other software for the device being designed.

Microsoft, though, charges a fixed fee for the programming tools needed to adapt Windows to the device being built, then charges manufacturers for each device sold, Hoppe said. This approach is the polar opposite of most embedded Linux companies, such as Red Hat or Monta Vista Software, which charge only for development and support costs.

For those customers who require greater support than what's available out of the box, Microsoft relies on partners such as Bsquare and VenturCom, Hoppe said.

It took Microsoft nearly 1 1/2 years from the time it released Windows NT 4.0 to deliver a commercial embedded NT 4.0 offering.

Because of the time lag, Microsoft decided against releasing a version of Windows 2000 Embedded and instead jumped straight to Whistler.

With Whistler, Microsoft's stated goal is to cut to 90 days the time that developers will need to wait for Microsoft to ship Whistler Embedded after it ships its other Whistler releases.

Microsoft has said it plans to ship at least the desktop version of Whistler in the latter half of 2001.

In late October the company delivered Beta 1 of Whistler, the code upon which Whistler Embedded is based. If Microsoft delivers on time, Whistler Embedded should debut by late 2001 or early 2002.

Along with Beta 1 of Whistler, which recipients should receive by early January, beta testers will get two new embedded-development tools.

In addition to Target Designer and Component Designer, Embedded Whistler testers will receive Database Manager, which allows developers to import their custom components into the Whistler database repository; and Target Analyzer, which allows developers to identify dependencies between the operating system and required device drivers.

Online Free Speech Group Disables Censorware

Internet-based anti-censorship group Peacefire released a download on Monday that disables so-called "filtering" software on PCs. These filters

are commonly used on school and library computers to block access to certain Web sites, most often those containing pornography or hate material.

The free program, available on the organization's Web site, is a simple executable file that reportedly targets, then thwarts, a host of commercial filtering applications including Cyber Patrol, Net Nanny and SurfWatch. Users are then able to access any site they wish.

Although the download works on individual PCs, it will not operate on computers running Linux or the Mac OS. However, Peacefire Webmaster Bennett Haselton told news sources yesterday that his group is already preparing the next generation of disablers, designed for computer networks.

Haselton said that Peacefire timed the release of its anti-censorship software to protest legislation recently passed by the U.S. Congress that would require public schools and libraries to install filtering software in order to receive federal funding for computers and computer applications. President Clinton is expected to sign the bill within a matter of days.

Several civil liberties organizations have already blasted the proposed legislation as unconstitutional. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said in a recent press release that it plans to challenge the bill on grounds that it grossly violates the First Amendment.

Meanwhile, Haselton expects to find filter developers scrambling to design patches to combat Peacefire's program. Haselton intends to update the Peacefire program in response.

Filtering advocates decried Peacefire's actions as a victory for the pornography industry, which, they say, will enable impressionable children easy access to graphic sexual content.

Net Nanny spokesperson Nika Herford told news sources that Peacefire's efforts only damage the group's cause.

Said Herford: "The more they do this type of stuff, the more it gives you impetus to legislate."

Peacefire's Haselton rebutted Herford's notion, arguing that "the government has the impetus to legislate regardless of what we do."

Peacefire calls filtering software insidious because it does more than simply keep smut out of children's reach. According to its research, filtering software "blacklists" other Web sites to which its designers are possibly opposed.

Moreover, none of the software tested permits potential purchasers the ability to see which Web sites are being blocked without going through an arduous trial and error process.

Peacefire contains a partial list of Web sites censored by filtering software. For example, Cyber Patrol blocks users from viewing both the Stop AIDS Project Web site and Nizkor.org, a site devoted to Holocaust research.

A Web site devoted to the works of St. Augustine has erroneously been blocked by many filtering programs because of the frequent recurrence of a

Latin word that is extensively used out of context on porn sites.

Even Time magazine has found itself a target of a filtering program. In 1997, soon after the magazine published an article indicating that filtering software CyberSitter had a "propensity to block sites like the National Organization for Women and newsgroups devoted to discussions of gay politics," a research librarian discovered that CyberSitter would not allow her to read Time's article online.

A Time correspondent wrote: "We're left with a queasy feeling: censorware filters out not only smut, but also discussions about how effective the [anti-smut] programs are."

Battle Heats Up Over Dot-Biz Web Address

An independent Internet company has asked the U.S. government to resolve a dispute over who has the rights to license the ".biz" suffix on Internet addresses.

The Atlantic Root Network Inc., a Virginia Beach, Va.-based Internet registry, filed a motion with the Commerce Department Monday alleging that the Internet's governing body overstepped its authority when it approved the .biz suffix for use last month.

Atlantic Root said in its motion that the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has no right to award the .biz registry to another company because Atlantic Root has been licensing .biz addresses since May of this year.

ICANN officials were not available for comment.

ICANN's board of directors approved seven new domain names when it met in California last month. Existing domains such as .com, .net, and .org will be joined by the likes of .coop, .museum and .biz. sometime next year.

Control of the .biz domain was awarded to JVTeam, a joint venture between Washington networking company NeuStar Inc. and Melbourne IT, an Australian domain registry.

Under an alternative addressing system, Atlantic Root has licensed 1,200 .biz addresses since last spring, addresses that could be duplicated when the ICANN-approved domains become available in February 2001.

"It will fracture the Internet, and it's already causing chaos," Atlantic Root President Leah Gallegos told Reuters on Thursday.

Gallegos said one domain, hotsex.biz, has already been offered up for auction on eBay even though another hotsex.biz is registered with Atlantic Root.

Atlantic Root acquired its rights to register .biz names from the Open Root Server Confederation, a group that espouses a more egalitarian approach to domain names and has approved many more domains for its alternative addressing system than ICANN currently allows.

But most computers cannot view .biz addresses without modifying settings on their computers or at their Internet service provider.

Some members of the confederation, including Gallegos, say that ICANN represents the interests of big business and government at the expense of independent operators.

''It's a power grab," Gallegos said. ''ICANN wants to control the Internet."

ICANN has recognized other domains that exist outside of its addressing system. At its meeting last month, ICANN board members decided not to approve the domain .web for use because it was already administered by another company.

ICANN officials were not available for comment.

Kriz Virus Makes Return Appearance

'Tis the season for nasty viruses. This one trashes PCs on Dec. 25 and spreads by piggy-backing on other viruses.

Kriz, a year-old computer virus, may be coming back for Christmas this year, thanks to its ability to piggyback on other viruses and spread with them.

The Kriz virus, also known as the W32.Kriz, is based on the CIH virus, which damaged computers worldwide when it was triggered on April 26, 1998. Anti-virus software maker Symantec on Tuesday warned users to scan their computers before Christmas and released a free tool to scan for the virus and remove it.

"Worms by their nature propagate pretty quickly," said Marian Merritt, group product manager for Symantec. "And when they get on a computer with Kris, they start spreading that."

Symantec and other anti-virus software already scan for the virus in their stand-alone programs.

The Kriz virus spreads to a computer when the user opens up an infected file, changing the basic program that runs the operating system, known as the kernel. The virus also infects other programs on the computer's hard drive and any mapped drives, leaving open the possibility that the virus could travel across company networks.

"Remember," said Symantec's Merritt. "It may have spread itself to all your executables, but you are only a carrier of the virus. The real payload hits on December 25."

When the virus triggers, it overwrites all files on the computer and then attempts to erase the software foundation of the PC, known as the basic input-output system, or BIOS. While the BIOS attack only occasionally works, the other attacks can be extremely destructive.

Symantec-rival Trend Micro Inc. believes the virus would not spread very far, but warns that its ability to combine with other viruses could change that.

Both Trend and Symantec reported that the virus has infected two other

worms: Happy99.worm -- also known as W32.Ska -- and W32.hllw.bymer.worm.

"Kriz is a destructive virus, but a really slow infector," said Joe Hartmann, anti-virus researcher for Trend. "Yet, it's now infected a mass-mailer, so now you have a destructive virus that's also a mass mailer." In the past 24 hours, Kriz ranked No. 8 on Trend's Worldwide Virus Tracking Center in terms of how many files the virus had infected. The tracking center is a real-time database of the types of viruses found by the Trend's online House Call scanner.

In North America, the virus ranked No. 6 for file infected. Despite that, the virus has not spread very widely yet, and is known to have infected about 50 computers in the last 24 hours. Because the tracking center only tracks viruses that have infected users of Trend's online service, the actual number could be much greater.

The Kriz virus is essentially a copy of the CIH virus, which was created in 1997 by Cheng Ing-Hau of Taiwan. CIH fizzled in its first year, and a variant that struck every month died out quickly. However, the annual variant did significantly more damage when it was triggered in April 1998.

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